



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Glenwood Springs Field Office
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81602



RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING #6

Wednesday, February 20, 2008 (5:00 PM – 8:30 PM)

Meeting Location: BLM Energy Office
2425 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs, CO

SUMMARY NOTES

Attendees: John Bailey (EcoTrails), Chris Beebe (Red Hill Council), Steve Dahmer, Michael Kennedy (Roaring Fork Climbers Coalition), Sherry Long (Encana), Larry McCown (Northwest Resource Advisory Council [RAC]), Ken Neubecker (Trout Unlimited), Greg Noss (High Country 4-wheelers), Kurt Schultz (Colorado Outfitters), Steve Smith (The Wilderness Society), Tom Turnbull, Sean Frisch (general public/ Lafarge), Denise Gergen (BLM), Brian Hopkins (BLM), Karl Mendonca (BLM), Brian Maiorano (BLM), Angie Adams (EMPS, Inc.), Chad Ricklefs (Tetra Tech, Inc.)

Handouts:

- Agenda
- BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office (GSFO) RAC Subcommittee Discussion on Range of Alternatives (February 6, 2008)

WELCOME

Brian Hopkins (BLM) and Angie Adams (EMPSi) welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation. This was followed by a round robin of introductions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

- A representative from Lafarge introduced himself; he is attending to get caught up on the RMP planning process.

RMP PLANNING PROCESS UPDATE

- Larry McCown (Northwest RAC) gave an update on last weeks RAC meeting update. The Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices' RAC Subcommittees are ahead of the White River Field Office Subcommittee with respect to alternatives development. The RAC appreciates the effort of the Glenwood Springs Field Office RAC Subcommittee in this planning process. Brian Hopkins (BLM) reiterated the RAC's and BLM's appreciation for everyone's time.
- The Draft RMP tentatively scheduled to be ready in fall 2008.
- RAC Subcommittee question: Does the Proposed RMP/Final EIS receive public comments? Angie Adams (EMPSi) response: The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is subject to protests (on land use planning level decisions). The Record of Decision (on the Approved RMP) will be signed after the 30-day protest period. The BLM Colorado State Director, Sally Wisely, signs the Record of Decision. There are several review phases of each of the three publications (Draft RMP/EIS, Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and

Approved RMP/Record of Decision): Cooperating Agency and RAC Subcommittee comments, which are filtered by the BLM Field Office; then the documents are reviewed by the State Office and Solicitor, and then the Washington Office.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

- Handout: Glenwood Springs Field Office RAC Subcommittee Discussion on Range of Alternatives (February 6, 2008)
- RAC Subcommittee comment: Maybe there should be three alternatives instead of four alternatives. Should Alternative B and D be switched? Alternative A is current management.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: Alternative D would be preservation oriented, and Alternatives B and C would be oriented towards varying levels of productions.
- BLM response: Need to make sure we provide alternatives that provide a reasonable range that covers the actions proposed. Two sideboards might include preservation on one side and development or production on the other. The proposed alternative (in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS) is typically developed from pieces of the various alternatives presented in the Draft RMP/EIS. If an additional alternative is generated at the Proposed RMP/Final EIS stage, then the RAC Subcommittee would be involved in that process.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: Development is a type of use; there are other types of development (recreation, etc.).
- RAC Subcommittee comment: The alternative bookends will be preservation and production (a lot of uses), and Alternative B will have an emphasis on mixed use with sacrificing values. Alternative B focuses on managing resources in strategic locations.
- RAC Subcommittee question: Are the differences between alternatives based on levels of restrictions or geographic areas? BLM response: Differences would be based on both. There should be some baselines in each alternative that covers the minimums (i.e., laws, best management practices). There are options to apply actions and restrictions to geographical locations (management units).
- BLM comment: Alternative B can be developed by taking components from Alternatives C and D; need to consider tradeoffs during that process.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: Preservation of sagebrush habitat reference area should be considered under all action alternatives. First need to define what the reference point is. Need to recognize areas of concern.
- Everyone reviewed the brainstorming comments on Alternative B that were provided during the 2/20/08 Cooperating Agency meeting (see meeting minutes from 2/20/08 Cooperating Agency Meeting):
 - Does BLM have the ability to vary priority species? BLM response: Yes, can manage different habitat types, activities, etc. for priority species under different alternatives.
 - RAC Subcommittee comment: Cutthroat trout habitat should be a priority under all alternatives.
- RAC Subcommittee question: Does recreation work with wildlife and habitat protection? Need to look at geographic areas to accommodate different resources and activities. The magnitude of recreation uses is important to consider.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: All of the alternatives would provide designated routes. Need to accommodate the growth that will be occurring in the next 20 years. Number of users will increase and technology of uses will change over time.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: Local residents want to recreate close to home, and destination users want to recreate further away from developed areas – there are different types of demand. Oil and gas areas in Alternative D could provide greater opportunities for recreation. Industry routes could be maintained as recreation routes in these areas. Degree of change of uses is captured in the different alternatives. Areas that see daily use (next to population areas) can have broader levels of use; destination areas should have narrower levels of use. BLM comment: Most scoping comments regarding recreation focused on areas close to population areas.

RAC Subcommittee brainstorming exercise:

- Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D):
 - Recreational demand and uses

- Limit to designated routes.
 - Incorporate three-state cutthroat trout agreement standards.
 - Maintain reference areas for sagebrush (really good examples).
- Alternative B: Alternative B emphasizes allocating limited resources among competing human interests, land uses and the conservation of natural and cultural resource values. Management direction is generally broad to accommodate a wide variety of values and uses and would focus on active and passive land stewardship that would produce environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Energy development is focused in high potential gas locations, forestry practices will target beetle kill areas
 - RAC Subcommittee comment: Should be geographic variations (management units) where applicable/appropriate.
 - RAC Subcommittee comment: Should be a strategic approach to variety of uses/values.
 - Recreational demand and uses
 - Emphasize close to population centers.
 - Allocate different recreational opportunities (including close to towns).
 - Variety of recreation opportunities to minimize user conflicts.
 - Consider directional travel.
 - Motorized recreational opportunities in leased oil and gas areas.
 - Recognize current recreational uses when considering future use allocations/types.
 - Energy development
 - Focus in high-potential areas.
 - Energy development should not displace other uses completely; maintain multi-purpose areas.
 - Use energy/industry routes as recreation routes in some places.
 - Fish & Wildlife (including Special Status Species)
 - Protect critical areas, especially farther away from population centers.
 - Apply seasonal closures or types of recreation limitations.
 - Vegetation (includes Forestry)
 - (no comments received)
 - Sagebrush habitat and sagebrush-dependent species
 - Maintain reference areas for sagebrush (really good examples) (common to all alternatives).
 - Special designations
 - More remote or pristine areas should be designated something special.
 - Protect multi-purpose protection areas (e.g., wildlife and wilderness characteristics in the same area).
 - Protective designations for sagebrush in strategic locations.
- Alternative C: Emphasizes resource protection and sustaining the ecological integrity of habitats for all priority plant, wildlife and fish species, particularly the habitats needed for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The alternative would offer environmental, social and bequest (inheritance) outcomes achieved by sustaining relatively physically unmodified landscapes, areas with wilderness characteristics.....(protection of land values)
 - RAC Subcommittee comment: This is the preservation alternative.
 - Recreational demand and uses
 - More nonmotorized uses.
 - Special designations
 - All lands with wilderness characteristics should be managed as such.
- Alternative D: Would emphasize a mix of multiple land uses. Management direction would focus on the direct use of public lands and their potential for producing commodities and offering services in an environmentally responsible manner. Ecological constraints may limit the extent of resource use and recreation activities in some locations.....
 - RAC Subcommittee comment: The emphasis should be on production and recreation.
 - Energy development

- Fewest restrictions.
- Most available lands.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

- **Wild and Scenic Rivers**

- Alternative A would maintain all eligible segments under interim protections.
- Alternative B would find a mix of segments suitable.
- Alternative C would make a suitability finding of all eligible segments.
- Alternative D would make a suitability finding of no eligible segments.

- **Citizens Proposed Wilderness Areas**

- Could use the same logic as used for Wild and Scenic Rivers for these areas (i.e., all, none, and some).

- **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)**

- RAC Subcommittee comment: Use ACECs as areas to protect important values. Need to identify areas of new concern over time due to changes in existing conditions.
- RAC Subcommittee question: How sacred are exiting ACECs? BLM response: These are areas that have higher levels of protection for their values. ACECs do not necessarily mean no activity is allowed. Not all ACECs have the same protection values.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: It would be okay to develop a trail in an ACEC if protective measures were implemented. Interaction with areas that are special helps people understand what they should be protecting (i.e., interpretation). BLM comment: Overlapping special designations can be used as a valuable tool; the trouble is determining which designation is the most important where they overlap.
- BLM comment: Alternative B may not provide an ACEC, for example, and the impact analysis of this scenario will show the impacts of this management direction. Provides any opportunity for analyzing a range of impacts.
- RAC Subcommittee comment: Alternative B could have strategic ACECs.

Additional RAC Subcommittee brainstorming regarding special designations:

- Thompson Creek: One alternative should manage for wilderness characteristics, one should manage for recreation, and one should manage for mixed nonmechanized uses and educational purposes. Need to look at adjacent US Forest Service uses and consider their route designations/uses.
- The Crown: Could be a bicycle area only, and motorized use from The Crown could be displaced to Thompson Creek.
- BLM question: Could The Crown be an ERMA with a mixture of routes and not be an SRMA? RAC Subcommittee response: The Crown should be considered as an ERMA under an alternative.
- The alternatives should vary in the use of special designations in order to provide a range of analysis.
- ACECs should provide a benefit for the users.
- Upper Eagle and Thompson Creek area:
 - RAC Subcommittee comment: Create ACECs in areas with wilderness characteristics.
 - BLM question: Should the BLM accommodate recreation in Castle Peak? RAC Subcommittee response: An alternative should look at this area as managed for wilderness characteristics. Areas with multiple uses are compatible. BLM question: Is there a demand for something different in this area?
- Need to look at sideboards for the alternatives that address ranges of use: multiple uses versus segregated use. RAC Subcommittee will be more concerned with Alternative B. Colorado River will be a heavily used area.

OTHER ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

- Brian Hopkins asked the group to think about how the RAC Subcommittee would like to stay involved after the last scheduled meeting (on February 27, 2008). Would the group like to continue meeting monthly (like the Cooperating Agencies) or only meet at key milestones? The BLM would like the groups' input on travel management. RAC Subcommittee would continue to advise the RAC.

Cooperating Agencies will continue to meet monthly with breaks during certain points in the RMP process (such as Summer 2008). RAC Subcommittee members have the expertise in particular areas.

- Larry McCown (RAC) comment: Any future RAC Subcommittee meetings should be scheduled on the same day as Cooperating Agency meetings (future scheduled meetings are April 2, 2008, and May 7, 2008).

NEXT MEETINGS

- Wednesday, February 27, 2008 (5:00 – 8:30 pm):
 - Meeting will focus on getting the group's feedback and buyoff on the range of alternatives.

ACTION ITEMS

- ☐ For future meeting dates, see "Next Meeting" above.
- ☐ **Brian Maiorano (BLM):** Present the results of the visitor survey at the February 27, 2008, meeting and provide more details on and discussions about SRMAs at Thompson Creek, The Crown, and East Eagle areas.

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